2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12
Choroti SK 6

M T C 586

casually committed with another man rarely caused him to divorce his wife; divorce took place only when she continued to maintain illicit relations with other men. The fact that among the Tobas polygamy is sanctioned by custom seems to have a tendency to make matrimonial unions looser than among the monogamous Choroti. But in all tribes the rule is that marriage lasts for life.

C 593 152

If the women in general seemed to be more faithful in marriage than the men, this was in part due to the fact that in the former jealousy was

T [291 301]

Young Toba woman. Bolivian Chaco.

a very prominent quality. After the Choroti girl has made her choice of a partner, she faithfully keeps to him and jealously watches his conduct towards other women. If she suspects him of being unfaithful, she will soon remind him of his duty towards his own wife. If she discovers him in illicit practices, for instance in another man's house, or taking part in the dances, she at once seizes him by the hair and drags him to his own home. This is in fact the way in which the Choroti women generally treat their unfaithful husbands, that is to say, by seizing them by the long hair and taking them home. I never noticed that a man treated in this somewhat rough way made any resistance. The submissive attitude of

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco
Toba 5/12
Chorotis K7

C 593 152 [691]

the men in such cases showed to what extent the women dominate the home life of the Choroti. There is not, among these Indians, any punishment for adultery as such, for the very reason that punishment in any form is unknown within the tribe. — Among the Tobas again a man may beat his wife if she commits adultery.

C 578 152

On the other hand, if a Choroti woman gets to know of a female rival, the result will in all probability be a fight between the two women, who use a sort of boxing glove of hide, or small daggers consisting of the leg-bone of a deer pointed at the end. The same custom is followed by the Mataco and the Toba women, in whom jealousy is likewise a prominent quality. Among the Tobas particularly, fights between girls who have fallen in love with the same man are of frequent occurrence. Similarly, if a married woman gets to know that her husband maintains illicit relations with another woman, the consequence is in most cases a fight between the legitimate wife and the rival, and these fights are not seldom sanguinary. The one even tries to kill the other which, of course, she very seldom succeeds in doing. Such fights are continued for several hours, often for a whole night, during which the two enraged women beat each other with the hands, scratch each other with the nails, or wound each other with big cactus thorns which they have tied at the wrists.

T 578 152

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12
Choroti SK6

relatives of the departed cannot live safely in it. This is the reason why in the Gran Chaco a traveller so often encounters remains of Indian villages which have evidently been burnt and abandoned by their inhabitants. The radical destruction of the whole village is always resorted to when several deaths have taken place at short intervals. The relatives of the deceased, when they abandon their own village, generally go and live with their relatives and friends in a neighbouring village, where they stay for some time, or until they decide to found a new settlement in some other part of the country. Custom requires that when the mourners arrive at the other village, they shall be received with wailing.

The Tobas, although they always burn the house where a death has taken place, do not as a rule deem it necessary to destroy the whole village. Similarly the relatives of the deceased generally remain there, building themselves a new dwelling; in other cases they leave the place for some time. The other inhabitants of the village, on the other hand, make no notable change in their mode of life, since they are not to the same extent exposed to danger from the death-spirit as the nearest relations.

Weeping and wailing plays an important part among the mourning ceremonies of the Indians, although it is always limited to the women and the children. The fact that wailing is ceremonial clearly appears from the circumstances under which it takes place. Although it is beyond doubt that the Indians are capable of real feelings of sorrow at the death of a near relation, yet their intense fear of death — including the fear of the dead body — is apparent throughout their mourning customs. The object of the wailing seems to be partly to propitiate the spirit of the departed relative by showing him how deeply the survivors grieve at his death, partly to frighten away the death-demon by the noise. The latter point of view is probably the most important. Wailing is continued for several months after the death. The length of the wailing period varies according to the social importance of the deceased. A great chief is mourned in all tribes for longer than an ordinary member of the community, in some cases up to a whole year. As to the manner of wailing there is a marked distinction between the Tobas and the Mataco on the one hand, and the Choroti on the other. The wailing of the Toba women is like a greatly exaggerated loud crying and sobbing which is seemingly the expression of a desperate sorrow. The wailing of the Choroti women is calmer and more like the weeping of a child. Every lamentation consists of a series of sounds produced in a high falsetto voice and